

LSC State Planning Report for Maryland

A Comprehensive, Integrated Statewide Legal Services Delivery System in Maryland

*Prepared for the
Legal Services Corporation, Inc.*



For more information, contact:
Wilhelm H. Joseph, Jr., Executive Director
Legal Aid Bureau, Inc., 500 East Lexington Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410/539-5340 / whjoseph@mdlab.org

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Introduction

Planning Process and Participants

In response to LSC Program Letter 98-1 (February 1998), the following report describes the efforts of the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc., and other Maryland legal services and pro bono providers to meet the goals of effective statewide civil law systems for the low-income community. The goals are to be “responsive to the most compelling needs of eligible clients, ensure the highest and most strategic use of all available resources and maximize the opportunity for *clients throughout the state* to receive timely, effective and appropriate legal services” (State Planning Considerations, LSC, July 1998).

The Bureau’s Long-Range Planning Committee of the Board of Directors worked with a Bureau staff committee (which has been working since 1996 on organizational redesign issues) and cooperated with the Maryland Coalition on Civil Justice (MCCJ) (which issued reports in 1996 and 1997) to continue the state planning process and to update its statewide planning process report. The committee held several planning meetings, contacted over 40 legal service and pro bono providers in the state seeking input, drafted a preliminary report, and met with other providers to refine the report (see Appendix A).

MCCJ, established in 1995 to begin the statewide planning process at LSC’s request, is a broad based coalition of legal services providers, community and bar leaders, legislators and legal services clients. The MCCJ issued two formal reports to the Maryland State Bar Association and LSC. MCCJ has ongoing work groups in which Bureau representatives participate and an active steering committee which continues to oversee implementation of the report’s recommendations.

The MCCJ Steering Committee, which is the executive and policy body, is composed of 12 bar and legal services leaders (the president and executive director of key organizations, including Legal Aid Bureau, Maryland Disability Law Center, Maryland Legal Services Corporation, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, Maryland State Bar Association, and People’s Pro Bono Action Center).

The MCCJ has provided an Addendum and Updates to its November 1997 report (Appendix B). In the November 1997 follow-up report to the Maryland Statewide Legal Services Plan for Low Income Persons (Appendix C), MCCJ noted a number of accomplishments and plans, including 1) a comprehensive evaluation of service priorities of unmet legal needs of indigent clients; 2) proposals to MSBA to revise the Rules of Professional Conduct to encourage greater pro bono participation; 3) plans to design and implement a legal services web site to increase communication and research; 4) a proposal and pursuit of funding for a statewide centralized intake, brief advice and referral system, and 5) a coordinated effort to pass a filing fee surcharge fee to help fund legal services in Maryland.

Overview of Legal Services in Maryland

The Legal Aid Bureau is the only LSC-funded legal services program in Maryland, serving low-income persons in Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 11 office locations. Twenty-seven other organizations (plus the Bureau) are funded by Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC), the state IOLTA program, and provide general or specialized legal services in some or all jurisdictions of the state. Approximately 24 other organizations, not funded by LSC or MLSC, provide specialized legal services in Maryland to domestic violence victims, prisoners, senior citizens, immigrants and others. In 1997, the Bureau opened over 32,000 cases, provided brief information and referrals to approximately 40,000 more individuals, and educated thousands of individuals about their legal rights with presentations and materials. Overall, the other 27 MLSC-funded organizations opened over 46,000 cases. There is no single source of case information available on the providers in Maryland that are not funded by MLSC or LSC.

Of 28 MLSC-funded programs (for FY1997), 15 offer services to clients in all jurisdictions of the state. Two of the 15 statewide organizations, the Legal Aid Bureau and the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS) (which serves all counties but Prince George's, Montgomery and Allegany) provide general civil legal services. The rest of the statewide programs provide client services in varied fields, such as immigration (Catholic Charities of Baltimore), employment (CASA of Maryland), housing (Baltimore Neighborhoods), family law and domestic violence (The Women's Law Center), juvenile and youth services (Advocates for Children and Youth), constitutional issues regarding police brutality and prisoner rights (The American Civil Liberties Union), tenant advocacy (Public Justice Center) and domestic violence (House of Ruth). They also provide general civil services to incarcerated individuals (Alternative Directions), people with AIDS and HIV (Health Education Resource Organization and the University of Maryland HIV Project), homeless individuals (Homeless Persons Representation Project), and individuals with disabilities (Maryland Disability Law Center).

MLSC-funded organizations in the individual counties of Maryland supplement the statewide services. General civil legal services to county residents are also provided through local bar-affiliated programs in Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Harford, Prince George's and Montgomery counties. These programs are almost entirely dependent upon the involvement of the private bar to serve eligible clients. The Allegany, Anne Arundel and Harford bar pro bono programs are operated from the local Legal Aid Bureau offices, providing a close working relationship.

MLSC-funded programs with specialized focus exist in certain jurisdictions. In Baltimore City, the Community Law Center furnishes community education and assists with nuisance abatement, Baltimore Neighborhoods confronts housing discrimination (and has a statewide landlord-tenant hotline) and St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center deals with home improvement fraud and lending discrimination. Baltimore, St. Mary's and the Eastern Shore Counties provide family law representation for victims of domestic violence (House of Ruth, St. Mary's Women's Center, and Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence). Heartly House in Frederick County provides family law legal services and represents victims of domestic violence.

The Maryland law schools, University of Baltimore (UB) and University of Maryland (UM), have clinical programs in which law students provide legal representation to low-income clients under the supervision of law school faculty and experienced lawyers. The UB Clinical Law Program provides clinical opportunities in family law, appellate practice, civil litigation, community development, disability law and criminal law in Baltimore City. In addition to the clinical program, UB places 50 students per year in public interest and government internships. The UM Clinical Law Program handles cases in the Baltimore metropolitan area including juvenile and special education issues, social

security and other benefits, housing court issues, environmental issues, criminal cases, mental retardation issues, and domestic law cases. The clinic also represents those who are HIV-positive (the only law clinic project funded by MLSC), mediation, and immigration issues (with Catholic Charities of Baltimore). UM also places students in public interest internships.

Alternative Delivery Systems by Maryland Programs

The Maryland legal services organizations incorporate a wide spectrum of alternative delivery mechanisms, including outreach and community education, pro se assistance, advice clinics, legal hotlines, and non-profit consultation.

Outreach and Education

Staff attorneys, volunteer lawyers and paraprofessionals at several organizations use outreach and community education to reach typically underserved populations and are expanding their efforts. The following examples illustrate the breadth of activity.

The Legal Aid Bureau provides focused outreach and education to special communities, such as migrant and seasonal workers at work sites, Spanish-speaking community at community forums and through Spanish language versions of its legal rights materials, senior citizens in nursing homes and senior centers, and homeless persons in shelters. It also provides outreach and education to others at schools, churches and community events. Alternative Directions educates individuals incarcerated in jails and prisons. Catholic Charities of Baltimore serves the immigrant and refugee population in Maryland by providing workshops on naturalization and lectures on welfare reform and workplace discrimination. In 1997, Baltimore Neighborhoods trained over 2500 police officers in handling landlord/tenant cases. CASA of Maryland's Employment Rights Project provides a 10-week course for Spanish-speakers in obtaining home-improvement licenses, and provides a weekly clinic in conjunction with the Law Foundation of Prince George's County. The Baltimore Pro Bono Project has done outreach and education at the Hispanic Apostolate since in March 1998, providing legal advice and representation to more than 200 Spanish-speaking clients. It also provides outreach and education to Maryland's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities and to incarcerated individuals. Heartly House and House of Ruth both educate police officers on handling domestic violence cases. Health Education Resource Organization holds monthly legal education sessions for AIDS and HIV-positive patients. Volunteers from the Homeless Persons Representation Project travel to shelters and soup kitchens for outreach, and provide educational seminars and training for homeless individuals. The Community Law Center provides education to community leaders in Baltimore City regarding community development.

Telephone Hotlines

Clients in need of an attorney to answer simple legal questions have several options, one of which is telephone hotlines. The Legal Aid Bureau has always provided brief advice, information and referral by telephone, especially in its offices outside Baltimore City, where clients may not have transportation to the offices which serve large or rural counties. In June 1998 the Bureau began pilot testing a legal advice and referral hotline in one office, using computer-facilitated screening scripts and on-line legal information to guide attorneys in giving advice and referrals. The Lawyer Referral and Information Service hotline (not funded by MLSC) of the Bar Association of Baltimore City refers low-income callers to Baltimore Bar Pro Bono Project, which does screening and intake for individuals seeking any type of legal assistance. The Women's Law Center offers a statewide hotline for general family law questions. Heartly House and House of Ruth both operate 24-hour hotlines for victims of domestic violence. The Public Justice Center's Tenant Advocacy Project provides a hotline for clients facing eviction. Similarly,

Baltimore Neighborhoods runs a statewide landlord-tenant hotline.

Assistance for Pro Se Clients

There is an array of pro se services available, ranging from small classes to on-site courthouse assistance in completing forms to telephone advice. These services are extensive in the domestic law area. The Legal Aid Bureau provides pro se divorce and bankruptcy clinics. It is working with the circuit courts in Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County and Wicomico County (and exploring such relationships in other counties) to assist unrepresented persons in navigating the court process, preparing documents and presenting their cases. A second Women's Law Center hotline assists pro se clients with filling out domestic relations legal forms. Prince George's County and Montgomery County Bar Foundations operate domestic pro se projects in their local courthouses. MVLS offers pro se divorce and brief advice clinics for clients using domestic relations forms in Frederick, Washington, Carroll and Dorchester Counties. The Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence provides assistance to victims of domestic violence filing pro se.

Impact Advocacy

Legal services providers in Maryland also engage in impact advocacy on behalf of their clients to bring about systemic change. The Legal Aid Bureau successfully challenged DSS's improper application of the work exception provisions in the new welfare law, thereby retaining temporary cash assistance benefits for a number of clients. Scores of other TCA recipients will benefit from the change in DSS practice resulting from the Bureau's advocacy. In another case, the Bureau prevented the eviction of a mentally disabled client in public housing. The case made the Public Housing Authority, operating 1100 units, aware of its duty to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled persons. The Bureau also has an active appellate practice that address issues of statewide impact, particularly in housing, family and juvenile law.

The Bureau participates in the Children's SSI Project, which provides representation to children in danger of losing their SSI benefits. The Baltimore Bar Pro Bono Project, Homeless Persons Representation Project, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, People's Pro Bono Action Center and others participate in this project.

Advocates for Children and Youth serves as a voting member of the Maryland State Department of Education Workgroup on School Order and Discipline. House of Ruth Domestic Violence Legal Clinic works with the Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor's Family Violence Council to reform domestic violence legislation, and is completing a court watch project monitoring the courts' treatment of domestic violence cases. Homeless Persons Representation Project filed a federal class action on behalf of individuals seeking reinstatement of SSI and SSDI benefits, and formulated and distributed a critique of the Baltimore City public housing policy. The Maryland Disability Law Center has three cases with systemic implications for children in special education, individuals with developmental disabilities and compliance with the ADA. The Public Justice Center focuses its efforts on impact litigation in the areas of homeless children and education, access to the courts by individuals with disabilities, and the rights of migrant and seasonal workers. St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center initiated two class action suits regarding violations of federal consumer acts. The Baltimore Bar Pro Bono Project is investigating a closed trade school and has provided more than 25 former students with information they need to discharge their student loan obligations.

Law School Clinics

The University of Maryland School of Law HIV Project (the only clinical program funded by MLSC) trains student attorneys to provide education and outreach, representation and

brief advice for HIV-positive and AIDS patients. The clinic also develops educational materials for clients and family members, social workers, medical providers and other service providers. Other activities of the clinic include, for example, preparing medical directives for an ill grandmother, helping a neighborhood center incorporate and acting as legal counsel, and working with high school students in a Baltimore neighborhood to file condemnation proceedings for vacant buildings. UM Clinical Law Program cooperates with Catholic Charities of Baltimore providing legal services in immigration matters. The University of Baltimore Family Law Clinic handles child custody, child support, divorce and protection from domestic violence. Its Disability Law Clinic focuses on mental health law and advocacy in administrative hearings. The Civil Clinic provides representation before courts and administrative agencies in consumer, housing, public benefits and other civil matters. The Legal Aid Bureau refers cases to the law clinics, and representatives from the clinics participate in some of its task forces.

Maryland Legal Assistance Network Project

MLSC has recently received a grant from the Open Society Institute to develop a Maryland Legal Assistance Network (MLAN) to increase access substantially to basic legal information, advice, education, and pro se assistance through an integrated network which includes a statewide centralized intake, advice and referral system; expanded assisted pro se discrete task (“unbundled”) legal services; expansion of legal education through the Internet-based “People’s Law Library”; and development and implementation of MLSC-funded MCCJ “Lawyer-to-Lawyer” web site. MLAN will greatly increase services while providing for increased coordination of Maryland’s legal services delivery system. An advisory committee, chaired by Maryland Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert Bell, will oversee the development and implementation of MLAN.

B. State Planning Progress

Intake, Advice and Referral Systems

Current approach

The Bureau provides telephone or walk-in access to persons seeking legal services from 11 offices and nine additional outreach sites in counties where there is no Legal Aid Bureau office. Seven offices have toll-free telephone lines. All offices have TTY access. Clients who lack transportation to the office location are provided with a home visit or met at a mutually acceptable and accessible location with confidential meeting space. Clients who are institutionalized are seen at the facility. Where a client’s primary language is other than English, the Legal Aid Bureau seeks first to utilize staff conversant in that language or, if necessary, hires professional interpreters. For mentally disabled clients, staff has been trained to be sensitive to emotional and cognitive disabilities and to work with clients accordingly. Where absolutely necessary, and the client agrees, the client may designate a representative to assist with the case.

The intake process involves screening callers or walk-in clients for financial and case type eligibility and, for eligible persons, having trained attorneys and legal assistants obtain basic information to determine if it is a problem which can be handled by brief advice or whether further representation or referral is required. Depending on the staffing of the office, either an attorney or paralegal will discuss with the client his or her substantive problems and provide advice (if a paralegal, under the supervision of an attorney), make a referral, or open a case for further assistance.

The Bureau makes every effort not to deny service completely to anyone seeking assistance. If full representation is not available, every appropriate attempt is made to provide sufficient information for an individual to handle the problem on his or her

own or to refer the individual to another provider who would be able to provide assistance. Where there is a denial of service, the individual is notified immediately of the inability to provide service and the reason why and of any other possible source of service. Referrals are made to other legal services providers as appropriate.

The Bureau uses a statewide case management system, Kemp's Clients for Windows, which allows immediate, direct input of intake information, conflict checks, referrals to other providers, generation of letters and self-help materials for clients, and timekeeping.

In mid-1998 the Bureau began pilot testing a legal advice and referral hotline in one office, using computer-facilitated screening scripts and on-line legal information to guide attorneys in giving information, advice and referrals. The project is being developed in cooperation with the Legal Advice Line, a new private telephone advice and information service tailored to serve those of modest income. The Bureau's hotline will provide a model for a statewide, coordinated intake and hotline referral service.

The Maryland Legal Assistance Network project intends to increase access substantially to basic legal information and advice through an integrated network which includes a statewide centralized intake, advice and referral system.

Goals to strengthen and expand services to eligible clients

Implement statewide, coordinated intake system that is client-centered and includes the ability to transfer clients immediately to other agencies as needed and to generate form letters, documents and resource material for clients.

Use a hotline system for initial calls, screening, brief advice and referrals but also allow for walk-in clients with emergencies or who do not have reliable access to a telephone.

Link Bureau intake process (coordinated intake/hotline services) with other providers to provide smoother referrals and pro bono placements.

Provide thorough training in procedures, policies, and substantive areas and provide resource materials (written and electronic) for staff at all levels: intake workers, advocates, and supervisors.

Develop more outreach sites, increase Spanish-speaking staff, expand coordination with agencies, and use more pro bono attorneys in remote sites.

Participate in the development and implementation of the MLAN project.

Major steps and timetable to achieve goals

June to September 1998—Pilot test in one office a legal advice and referral hotline, using computer-facilitated screening scripts and on-line legal information in partnership with Legal Advice Line, a new low-cost legal information service company in Maryland.

September 1998 to March 1999—Test the hotline service in other large Bureau offices.

December 1998 to September 1999— Provide thorough training in procedures, policies, and substantive areas and provide resource materials (written and electronic) for staff at all levels.

December 1999—By this time, the Bureau plans to have a fully integrated hotline intake system for all its offices.

During this timeframe, the Bureau will evaluate the system and its value to clients and will make modifications as needed. The Bureau will also be working with the Project for the Future of Legal Services as a model state for an integrated, statewide legal services delivery system and with the Maryland Legal Assistance Network Project, both funded by the Soros Foundation.

Use of New and Emerging Technology

Current approach

The Bureau has a technology committee for planning for technology uses and is represented on the Maryland Coalition for Civil Justice (MCCJ) Technology Work Group. The Bureau is planning to install a wide area network and provide desktop computers for all advocates as well as technology to support a coordinated intake hotline system. The MCCJ is establishing a statewide Public Interest Lawyer-to-Lawyer (LTL) web site for all pro bono and staff legal services advocates. It has obtained funding for the development, maintenance and training associated with the new web site and will be monitoring its design and usage. The new web site is expected to be tested by the fall of 1998. This extranet will include research memoranda and archives of relevant documents, resource directories, training, information and access to specialized databases. It is expected that wider use of the site for pro bono case referral and support will occur as a result. Conferencing capabilities are also planned for the future.

The Bureau is at 57% capacity toward a goal of a computer on every advocate's desktop. It has negotiated reduced fees for computer courses for staff at a private computer training center and identified other, low-cost computer training throughout the state. Approximately one-half of previously untrained staff has received training in Windows 95, Word, and Internet use. (Some of the remaining staff have prior knowledge of these programs.) About 90% of staff has been trained to use Clients for Windows.

Computers are networked in every Bureau office; each office has at least one computer with Internet access and e-mail capability. When the wide area network is in place, every computer will have e-mail. Also, the technological infrastructure will support telephone intake and brief advice systems. Computer software is used to handle case management, conflict checking, time keeping, financial management, human resources, and resource development. Other MLSC-funded programs have access to e-mail and the Internet. One MLSC-funded program also uses Clients for Windows, and a number of others use Morrissey's TIME for case management.

The Bureau currently has technology staff that includes a manager of information systems and a law and technology coordinator.

In December 1997 the Bureau launched its web site (<http://www.mdlab.org>). Other Maryland-based legal services web sites have been developed by MLSC, Public Justice Center, the People's Law Library, and the upcoming LTL site by the Maryland Coalition for Civil Justice. The Bureau web site provides legal education materials, links to useful legal information sites, training and events calendar and employment and volunteer opportunities. The MLSC web site provides similar information. The People's Law Library provides self-help materials and forms. The LTL web site will provide computerized brief banks, other materials, and legal research tools.

Bureau offices have access to Internet research and discussion groups. Bureau libraries are moving to CD-ROM collections and on-line legal research capabilities. Bureau advocates participate via Internet and teleconferencing in discussion/work groups coordinated by the National Housing Law Project, the ABA Center for Children and the Law and the statewide Family Investment Program project and use e-mail and listserves to communicate internally and externally. A few pro bono referral organizations already use e-mail to place cases, summarizing the facts in a generic way to entice volunteers while maintaining confidentiality. The Baltimore Bar Pro Bono Project has been successful using e-mail and broadcast fax to place cases.

The Bureau has partnered with the Legal Advice Line, a new private telephone advice and information service tailored to serve those of modest income, to establish a hotline for intake, information and referral services, using computer-accessed intake scripts and hyperlinked legal research material.

Goals to strengthen and expand services to eligible clients

Establish a wide area network and the technological infrastructure to support telephone intake and brief advice systems for the Legal Aid Bureau.

Establish extranet links to other legal services providers, pro bono attorneys, and agencies throughout the state.

Increase numbers of desktop computers so that every advocate has one.

Expand the MIS staff for additional technology support.

Move forward in assisting the MCCJ to establish the LTL web site.

Major steps and timetable to achieve goals

By mid-1999, the Bureau will have a wide area network and additional trained staff to administer the system. Vendors have been interviewed and, once approved, the installation of the system and training of staff will begin.

By the end of 1999, every case handler will have a Pentium-level computer and access to the Internet and use of e-mail.

By fall 1998, MCCJ LTL web site will be tested.

Once the wide area network system is in place and the LTL is operational, the Bureau will be able to establish extranet links to other legal services providers.

Expand Client Access to Courts, Enhance Self-Help Opportunities, and Provide Preventative Legal Education

Current approach

Low-income people in Maryland are informed of legal rights and the availability of legal services through publications (telephone directory, community directories), community outreach and education programs, and Internet web sites. Legal education materials are available on the Bureau's web site and brochures are distributed in offices and during community outreach activities. Bureau materials are primarily in English but some have been or are being translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole. The Bureau trains other legal services and social services providers to recognize and refer legal problems to appropriate providers.

Some of the Bureau's outreach efforts include presentations at nursing homes, senior centers, homeless shelters, and high schools; exhibit tables at community and school fairs; and intake several days a month at libraries, courthouses, senior centers and other locations in communities where the Bureau does not have permanent offices. The Bureau is working with the Northwestern High School Advisory Project, MSBA's Law Links program, Law Related Protective Services Advisory Board and HOYAS program to provide opportunities for high school students to have law education and serve as student interns. Bureau staff worked with the state bar association to produce a training video tape, "How to Fight City Hall: A Guide to Administrative Hearings," which is used for outreach and education.

The Bureau is working with the circuit courts in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County (and exploring such relationships in other counties) to assist pro se domestic litigants to navigate the court process and effectively and efficiently prepare documents and present their cases. At the request of Chief Judge Robert Bell of the

Maryland Court of Appeals, the Bureau is developing a model to be used in other courts throughout the state. According to Judge Bell, “Legal Aid’s help at the front end makes the Court’s job easier.”icipates, at the request of the Court, in such statewide court endeavors as the Alternative Dispute Resolution Commission, Juvenile Rules subcommittee, Foster Care Court Improvement Project, Landlord-Tenant Commission and Family Law Court study committee. There is extensive involvement by Bureau staff in state and local bar committees and projects.

To help improve access for clients in their own community, the Bureau will soon provide a case handler to help with intake at the law school satellite office in the Park Heights community of Baltimore. This project, initiated by University of Maryland Clinical Law Program, will use law students, a private attorney, and a Bureau legal advocate to provide information, advice, referrals and case work. This consortium will be expanded to coordinate community economic development work in the future.

The Maryland Legal Assistance Network project intends to increase access substantially to basic legal information, advice, education, and pro se assistance through an integrated network which includes an expanded assisted pro se discrete task (“unbundled”) legal services and expansion of legal education through the Internet-based “People’s Law Library.”

Goals to strengthen and expand services to eligible clients

Update legal information (brochures, etc.) and develop others.

Improve dissemination of legal information and materials in the community through publicity, public speaking, and legal education presentations.

Involve private bar to increase pro bono participation and the judiciary to support pro se representation and authorize indigency affidavits for waivers of filing fees and other court costs.

Increase the access of eligible clients to legal and other services in their communities.

Expand community economic development.

Participate in the development and implementation of the MLAN project.

Major steps and timetable to achieve goals

July to December 1998—The Bureau is producing a “Workers, Know Your Rights” booklet in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole and will update other general information for clients and translate it into Spanish.

Fall 1998 and forward—The Bureau writes regular columns for bar bulletins in Montgomery, Prince George’s, and Howard Counties and contributes articles to the Office on Aging Senior Digest. We will explore other publishing opportunities as well as additional public speaking, participation in community events and legal education workshops.

Fall 1998 and forward—The Bureau was awarded a 3-year Mark-to-Market grant from HUD to educate tenants in privately owned, federally subsidized housing about their options when the federal subsidies expire. Also, a Bureau attorney will be working as an Open Society Institute Community Fellow over an 18-month period to educate relative caregivers of disabled children to become self-advocates for needed services. As noted previously, the Bureau also is providing a legal advocate to work with the law school satellite office in the Park Heights community.

In 1998 and forward, the Bureau will participate in the development and implementation of the MLAN project.

Coordination of Legal Work and Capacity To Provide Training, Information and Expert Assistance

Current approach

The Bureau regularly assesses training needs in substantive law, legal skills, management, and technology and develops an annual training plan for staff and pro bono providers. It develops training through substantive task forces and other design committees, conducts events throughout the year to meet needs, and evaluates effectiveness of training events.

Training begins with staff orientations as to procedures and policies, one-on-one training by immediate supervisors and coworkers, and access to videotapes from prior training on all subject matter areas handled. There are regular in-house substantive law trainings, regular in-house routing of updated legal information, and access to subsidized attendance at trainings sponsored by bar associations and the Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Legal Education (MICPEL). The Bureau offers in-house skills training for new and experienced lawyers and paralegals, which is made available to volunteers and pro bono attorneys. Bureau staff members regularly serve as faculty for MICPEL courses, train ombudsmen of local offices on aging, and make presentations at local, statewide and national conferences for legal advocates, social workers, and others.

Through the People's Pro Bono Action Center (PPBAC), volunteer lawyers and pro bono program staff have access to a wide range of continuing legal education seminars. PPBAC sponsors or co-sponsors several training programs each year in areas of law relevant to low-income clients (e.g. special education, bankruptcy, family law, etc.). Several staff and pro bono referral programs also conduct specialized training programs throughout the year. Additionally, PPBAC coordinates the MICPEL Pro Bono Partnership Program, enabling pro bono advocates to attend a series of diverse continuing legal education programs for free or at a reduced fee. In total, there are approximately 75 to 100 seminars per year open to volunteer lawyers.

PPBAC publishes a bimonthly pro bono training calendar which is publicized in the state's legal and business newspaper and the MSBA's monthly newsletter and mailed to legal services providers, law firm pro bono coordinators and relevant bar committees. PPBAC is currently in the process of expanding its training program to allow greater access for staff legal services lawyers.

Currently, the Bureau is working with the People's Pro Bono Action Center, Bar Association of Baltimore City, MSBA, MVLS, MLSC, University of Maryland School of Law and other cosponsors to plan the first statewide legal services conference in November 1998, "Partnerships: New Strategies to Serve the Indigent," to address substantive and delivery issues and promote networking of legal services providers and pro bono attorneys throughout the state. Also, the Bureau is working with the Management Information Exchange to conduct a regional training in Maryland on Legal Work Supervision. The three-day training will be held October 1998 for legal services and pro bono managers in Maryland and other mid-Atlantic states. The Bureau held its annual four-day trial advocacy skills training for new staff and pro bono attorneys in April 1998.

The Bureau coordinates legal work and information through its director of advocacy, who monitors, analyzes and shares information about significant judicial, legislative and administrative developments and legal strategies with Bureau staff and other providers. Substantive task forces and experienced staff assist with this information sharing and coordination of advocacy. Information is shared electronically now to a limited extent but should be enhanced with implementation of LTL web site. The

Bureau is taking steps to streamline, economize and computerize its library holdings in all offices.

The deputy director and director of advocacy are working together to strengthen both management and advocacy work in Bureau offices. They are assessing office management and practices and their responsiveness to community needs, and they are working with staff to improve policies and procedures, expand service, meet training needs and establish a statewide advocacy support team.

Practice manuals and resource materials are developed with training programs, maintained in the training library, distributed at training events and to branch office libraries and made available to other providers.

Bureau staff participates actively with other legal service providers in task forces and coalition work to determine needs and further the rights of clients. Other providers are invited to participate in the Bureau's substantive law task forces. The Bureau provides internship opportunities to law school, paralegal, social work and other students. Cases are co-counseled with the law school clinical programs. Staff works on committees and task forces with community groups, court officials, and social service and other governmental agencies to improve the functioning of the courts and agencies to meet the needs of the clients.

The Bureau is working with Public Justice Center (PJC) staff on a number of collaborative projects and also rents space to them in the main office in Baltimore. The Bureau refers matters to PJC that the Bureau is prohibited from doing, such as class actions and the representation of undocumented persons. With clients' permission, the Bureau has referred appropriate clients to the Homeless Persons Representation Project for class action litigation. One such referral resulted in a consent decree with the Social Security Administration, which agreed to modify its procedures for cases involving potential termination of the benefits of persons with drug or alcohol addictions.

Goals to strengthen and expand services to eligible clients

Develop statewide coordinated training programs and calendar

Develop statewide electronic library for briefs, forms, and interview checklists and make use of lawyer-to-lawyer web site

Strengthen both management and legal practices in every office

Develop closer relationships with professional schools in the area, e.g., schools of social work, medicine, and pharmacy, for mutual learning. (For example, medical residents in orthopedics could help us better understand medical issues in disability cases and we could train them to be expert witnesses.)

Major steps and timetable to achieve goals

November 1998—Cosponsor with other providers the first statewide legal services conference in Maryland. When the LTL web site is operational, training notices from all providers can be posted.

By the end of 1999, the Bureau will take steps to streamline, economize and computerize its library holdings in all offices. There are currently proposals from Lexis and Westlaw for CD-ROM and on-line services as well as indications that some state-specific legal databases will be available on the LTL web site.

By the end of 1999, the Bureau will assess the management, practices, and scope of services provided by all offices and help staff strengthen effective delivery of services to clients through improved procedures and training and by establishing a statewide

advocacy support team.

By the end of 1999, the Bureau will develop closer relationships with professional schools in the area.

Involvement with Private Bar

Current approach

The Bureau employs a number of mechanisms for referral of cases to private attorneys and participates in every pro bono program available in the state. The Legal Aid Bureau does the client intake and then refers the client's case to the Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Service (MVLS), Harford County, Baltimore City, Monumental City, Prince George's County, Charles County and Anne Arundel County pro bono programs for placement. The Bureau directly makes referrals of client intakes to a number of attorneys who choose to accept cases from the Bureau directly. For the Allegany and Montgomery County pro bono programs, clients are referred to those programs for intake. The Bureau maintains open cases for each client referred to other pro bono programs and sends out client satisfaction questionnaires when notified by the pro bono programs that the case is closed.

The Bureau, in select cases, requests involvement by pro bono attorneys in providing training or co-counseling. All of the Bureau's Board members and members of special Bureau committees (such as fundraising) serve on a pro bono basis. The Bureau also receives pro bono assistance from attorneys and other professionals in the areas of updating technology, legal office administration, legal process service, stenography, and other skills. The Bureau requests and obtains from private attorneys and bar associations assistance such as meeting space, discounts on training, financial and in-kind contributions and other services.

In addition, the Bureau provides support to private attorneys handling pro bono cases by including private attorneys in its in-house training, providing free space and use of Bureau equipment and support staff for pro bono programs, co-counseling and providing mentoring to inexperienced attorneys, doing intake for pro bono programs, and participating in bar association efforts to recruit pro bono attorneys.

In Frederick County, the Bureau staff and the Equal Justice Council (consisting of private attorneys who help strengthen funding and policy support and public recognition for the Bureau) helped revitalize that bar's Delivery of Legal Services Committee. In Montgomery County, the Metropolitan Maryland office contributes a monthly legal service column to the Bar Foundation Journal and the chief attorney participated in the Foundation's biannual retreat. In Allegany County, the newly created Allegany Law Foundation which took over the pro bono program recently was due largely to the efforts of the chief attorney of the Western Maryland office, who is an incorporator, member and director of the board.

The Bureau has a successful volunteer law student intern program. For many years the Bureau has placed law students from the University of Baltimore and University of Maryland law schools in internships for credit, paid with fellowship money or by the Bureau, or as volunteers. The Metropolitan Maryland office has established ties with the five major law schools in the Washington, D.C. area, allowing the Bureau's offices to be internship sites for law students. As a result, the Bureau expanded its Summer Intern Program with orientation, a handbook, and final debriefing/farewell luncheon, and was able to place five D.C. area law students along with six Baltimore area law students in six different Bureau offices and units during the summer of 1998.

Most of the MLSC-funded pro bono programs increase the number of clients that they are able to serve through the productive use of pro bono attorney panels, largely

maintained and coordinated by the People's Pro Bono Action Center. PPBAC is the statewide pro bono support program that works with local pro bono programs to recruit and train volunteer attorneys to serve on these panels throughout Maryland.

The county-based pro bono programs generally accept a variety of civil cases with the heaviest concentration in domestic, consumer/bankruptcy, trusts and estates and housing. All make significant use of pro bono attorneys by working consistently and effectively with PPBAC and the local bar associations. The Bureau refers cases to these programs and has a contractual relationship with the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service to handle a specified number of referrals. Organizations either rely solely upon their volunteer panels (e.g., the Baltimore Bar Pro Bono Project, MVLS), or employ a hybrid of staff attorneys and volunteers (e.g., Homeless Persons Representation Project, House of Ruth). The hybrid programs typically focus on an issue or particular client population. Most volunteers are engaged in numerous issues and delivery techniques. As a result, pro bono lawyers in the state are representing individual clients in traditional types of cases, staffing telephone hotlines, visiting soup kitchens and shelters to advise the homeless of their rights, counseling new immigrants through advice clinics, working as co-counsel on systemic issues, assisting with legislative initiatives, serving as experts in highly specialized areas of law, and mentoring and training other volunteer attorneys.

Since the initiation of the People's Pro Bono Campaign in 1989, the number of clients served by pro bono lawyers has increased dramatically: 5,897 cases reported in 1993; 6,160 in 1996; and 7,993 in 1997.

Training is provided to staff and pro bono attorneys throughout the state by the Bureau, PPBAC, MICPEL, MVLS, House of Ruth and others. Desk manuals of selected legal information and documents pertaining to various legal subjects are usually prepared in conjunction with training events. There are plans to provide these materials electronically on the LTL web site. MICPEL, MSBA, and other bar associations offer free or reduced fees for courses for legal services and pro bono attorneys. Private attorneys and law professors work with legal service advocates to design and present substantive and skills training. Training and volunteer opportunities are currently posted on the Bureau's web site and exchanged among providers through the mail. Additional electronic connectivity will be achieved through the LTL web site.

To facilitate participation and coordinate services, PPBAC organizes meetings for staff pro bono coordinators through the Pro Bono Coordinating Council, convenes large law firm pro bono coordinator sessions, and develops statewide policies and goals for private attorney involvement. PPBAC acts as a clearinghouse for volunteer lawyers, referring recruits to the network of legal services providers according to interest, jurisdiction and expertise. The non-profit support center works closely with the MSBA to continuously promote pro bono participation and recruit volunteers through bar-sponsored meetings, publications and events. This coordinated approach to volunteerism enables the providers to dedicate more time and resources to actual service delivery than marketing and recruitment activities.

Retention of volunteer attorneys is aided by the recognition of their efforts. The Bureau recognizes pro bono attorneys through luncheons and articles in its newsletters. Future efforts will include press releases, articles in bar publications, and the annual report. PPBAC sponsors an annual People's Pro Bono Awards program at the MSBA Annual Meeting, where it recognizes outstanding individuals, firms, members of the judiciary and projects. The chief judge of the highest court presents the statewide awards, which in 1998 went to the chief attorney of the Bureau's Western Maryland office, who is on the Board of Directors of the Allegany County

Law Foundation. MLSC also sponsors an annual awards event. A few programs, including MVLS, also sponsor smaller recognition programs. Most write thank you letters to the attorneys and publish the attorneys' names in their newsletters.

The MCCJ Private Bar Involvement Workgroup developed a proposed new Rule 6.1 of the Maryland Rules of Professional Conduct, which encourages greater pro bono participation and reporting of pro bono activities, and conducted substantial lobbying on that proposal. It also secured the commitment of the chief judge to establish a Judicial Commission on Pro Bono to facilitate judicial and lawyer participation in pro bono activities.

Goals to strengthen and expand services to eligible clients

Specify pro bono Rule 6.1 to set goals for hours per year or checkbook pro bono.

Enhance judicial encouragement of pro bono participation.

Emphasize local programs and partnerships.

Promote and improve pro bono participation in rural areas.

Encourage lawyer referral service/pro bono organization links that allow pro bono attorneys to make contact with potential paying clients.

Reevaluate priorities of staff and pro bono programs to identify activities and cases that lend themselves to the different types of private attorney practice.

Engage greater participation in domestic cases through training, use of alternate dispute resolution, allowing fees from the marital estate, and enlisting more extensive pro bono services from the ERISA and tax bar.

Major steps and timetable to achieve goals

By the end of 1999, the Bureau will prepare a report on the State of Poverty Law to inform the Maryland judiciary and private bar of the latest developments and issues affecting legal services to low income clients.

December 1998 and forward—The planning, implementation and follow-up of the State of Poverty Law Conference will move us toward most of the goals above.

In 1998, the Bureau will identify one or more law students to apply for NAPIL and other fellowships. We will seek other support for law student placements in our offices to give them experience with legal services work and encourage future support through staff positions or pro bono work.

Diversified Funding and Coordination of Resource Development Efforts

Current approach

In 1997, the Bureau established the Equal Justice Council, made up of over 65 leaders in the legal profession, former staff, and current and former Board members, to strengthen funding and policy support on the federal, state and local levels and ongoing support from individual donors and foundations.

The EJC worked in cooperation with MSBA, MLSC, MCCJ and other groups to secure passage of the court filing fee surcharge legislation in the 1998 Maryland General Assembly, which is expected to generate \$2.7 million per year for legal services, a substantial portion of which will come to the Bureau. The 1997 EJC fundraising campaign, seeking at least \$100 per lawyer in Maryland, raised \$130,000, which was matched dollar for dollar by challenge grants from MLSC. The 1998 EJC fundraising goal is \$250,000 to meet another MLSC challenge grant.

The Bureau is seeking additional funds from the government, foundations and United

Way. Recently, the Bureau received a three-year HUD grant (\$160,000) for outreach, education, and legal assistance to tenants facing loss of housing due to subsidized housing contract expiration. Also, a Soros Community Fellowship will enable an attorney to train and mentor relative caretakers of disabled children to seek and to obtain necessary support services and to assist in monitoring state services to these and other children in the state system for neglected and abused children. The Bureau also received funds from a local foundation to assist with fundraising efforts. The Bureau has been a member of the Central Maryland United Way (serving four counties and Baltimore City) for many years. In 1997 and 1998, it received approval to receive designations in several other counties.

The Bureau is expanding its media relations to make potential supporters aware of the Bureau's services and its benefits and the unmet legal needs of low-income individuals.

Goals to strengthen and expand services to eligible clients

Develop major public relations campaign to let the public know of the good work of legal services providers.

Improve communications with legislators, local governments and funding sources about the services we provide to low-income clients.

Maximize resources by combining and coordinating activities, e.g., training, with other providers.

Diversify funding sources, including continuing the annual EJC campaigns and obtaining United Way designations in all counties.

Structure the release of present funding so that recipients can have more certainty in planning for the future.

Major steps and timetable to achieve goals

In 1997 and 1998, two staff positions (with redeployment of existing staff) were created to reflect an emphasis on resource development and communications and public relations. The staff members have ongoing responsibilities for annual giving campaigns, foundation research and proposal writing, an annual report, press releases and other publications.

In 1998, the Equal Justice Campaign will raise \$250,000 in private donations to be matched by MLSC.

In 1999, the Board of Directors, Equal Justice Council and management will continue to establish additional plans and timetables for further resource development.

Configuration That Maximizes Delivery of Legal Services throughout State

Current Approach

The Legal Aid Bureau is the only LSC-funded provider in Maryland and works closely with the legal services community in the state, both MLSC and non-MLSC funded. Together these providers deliver creativity and innovation to meet the growing legal needs of the state's indigent. By employing a variety of delivery systems, which include brief advice, pro se assistance, law student representation, outreach and education, and impact advocacy, Maryland deploys its resources wisely and effectively to tailor services to client needs.

Goals, Major Steps and Timetable

Fall 1998 and forward—Work with the Project on the Future of Legal Services to

evaluate legal services delivery in Maryland as part of the Model States Project.

Spring 1999—Convene a conference for the Bureau staff and board to motivate and prepare them to move forward in the creation and implementation of innovative approaches to delivery of legal services in Maryland.

In 1998 and forward, the Bureau will participate in the development and implementation of the MLAN project.

Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.

Equal Justice for Maryland

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Office Locations

Baltimore Offices

Baltimore City
500 East Lexington Street

Cherry Hill
2490 Giles Road

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